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Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965

Note verbale dated 28 June 2017 from the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit herewith an explanation of vote of the United Arab Emirates on General Assembly resolution 71/292, entitled "Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965", adopted on 22 June 2017 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations would be grateful if the present note verbale and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 87.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 28 June 2017 from the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Explanation of vote of the United Arab Emirates on General Assembly resolution 71/292, entitled "Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965"

On 22 June 2017, the United Arab Emirates voted in favour of resolution 71/292, entitled "Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965".

At the outset, the United Arab Emirates encourages all parties involved in disputes to continue dialogue in good faith so as to reach a peaceful settlement. Nevertheless, the United Arab Emirates believes that the General Assembly can benefit from the guidance of the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. An advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice offers practical assistance to allow the parties to move forward if they are unable to reach a bilateral agreement. Although we remain fully cognizant of the important security interests of the United Kingdom and the United States in the Indian Ocean, which should be taken into consideration, we felt compelled to vote in favour of the resolution.

Our decision to vote in favour of the aforementioned resolution is based on our respect for States' claims to sovereignty, the efforts of both parties to seek a peaceful settlement of the dispute and our firm belief in the importance of the advisory role of the International Court of Justice, particularly as a mechanism to assist in the peaceful resolution of situations of international importance when negotiations between States fail.

The United Arab Emirates has first-hand experience to draw from in this regard. The United Arab Emirates rejects the illegal occupation of the three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa in the Arabian Gulf by Iran in 1971. Iran has historically rejected, and to this day continues to reject, all calls by the United Arab Emirates for bilateral negotiation, instead engaging in acts of provocation contrary to international law and common human values. The United Arab Emirates continues to call upon its neighbour Iran to return the three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa to their rightful owners, either voluntarily or through peaceful means, particularly through arbitration or the International Court of Justice.